

From: Todd VerBeek
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: what a waste

The settlement with Microsoft isn't a settlement; it's a capitulation.

The restrictions it places on Microsoft are as feeble and meaningless as the ones in the consent decree of several years ago... the toothless slap on the wrist that made this suit necessary in the first place. It accomplishes nothing but to =condone= and =endorse= the position of Microsoft as the 800-ton gorilla of the technology industry.

Compelling Microsoft to donate software to poor schools isn't a punishment or a remedy of any kind; it's an endorsement of predatory pricing! Let's all watch as Microsoft gives software away (below cost), drives the remaining competition out of the education market, and later starts charging for the (practically mandatory) upgrades.

Consumers will still be offered nothing but superficial variations on the Microsoft blueprint when we go shopping for a PC. They will be offered a single operating system, a single word processor, a single spreadsheet, etc.

Programmers (my livelihood) will have the "freedom" to innovate outside the world Microsoft defines... and die of starvation because that world is dwindling to nothing, or the "freedom" to innovate within the Microsoft model, hoping for some table scraps as we help to advance Microsoft's business plans.

This settlement assures those of use who aren't in bed with Microsoft with only one consolation: There will be another suit in a few years, and by that time Microsoft's monopolistic practices (and the damages therefrom) will be even greater, and even more difficult for the courts to ignore.

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